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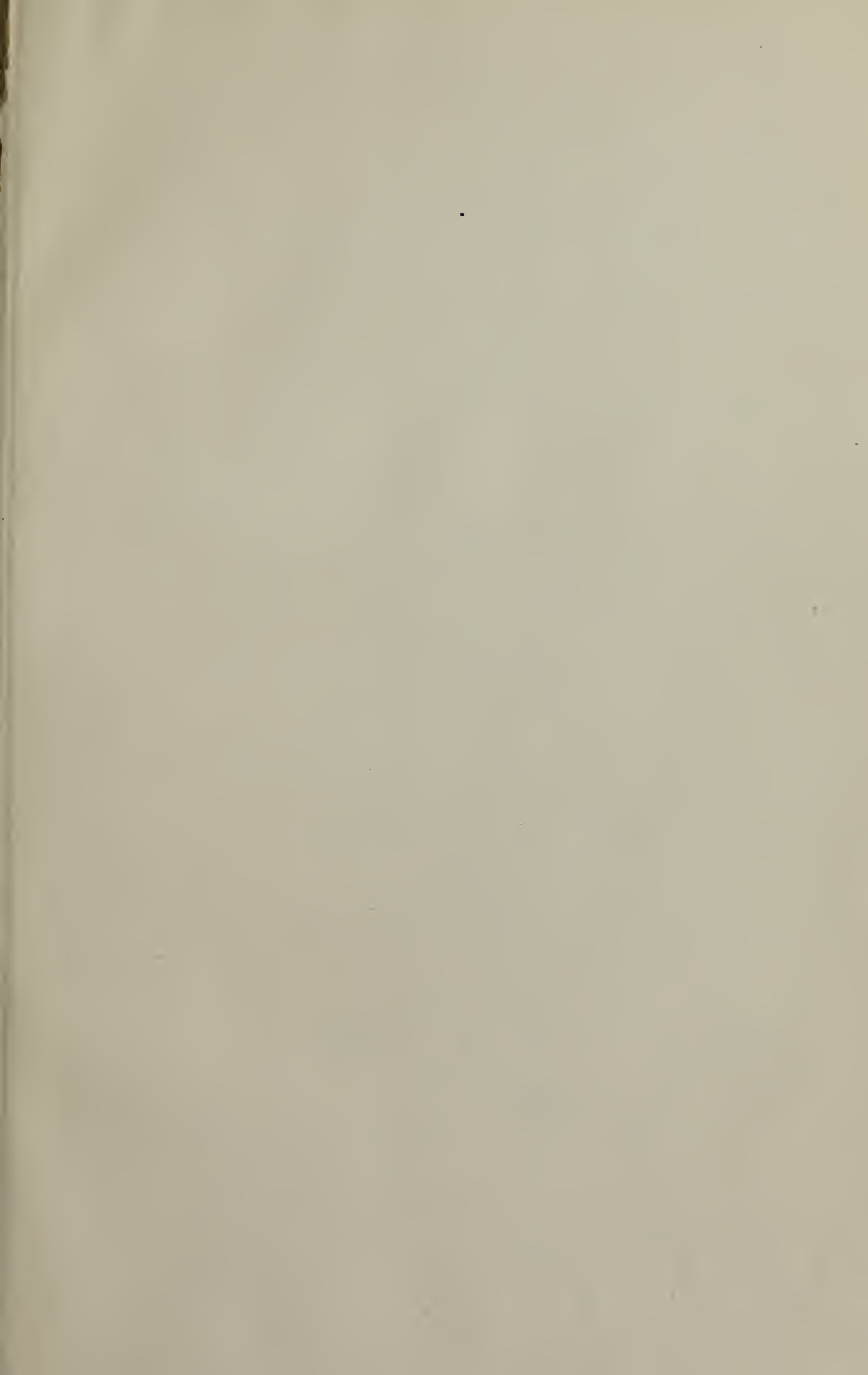
Massachusetts Historical Society

BY

Essex Institute

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IN MEMORIAM.

A DISCOURSE

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF

ELIZABETH HAVEN.

IN THE CHAPEL OF

ROCKFORD FEMALE SEMINARY,

DECEMBER 10TH, 1871, BY

REV. HENRY M. GOODWIN.

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DISCOURSE.

In my Father's House are many mansions ; if it were not so I would have told you ; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.—John, xiv., 1-3.

With such high and comforting words does our blessed Lord seek to cheer the hearts of his disciples in their hour of sorrow and approaching bereavement. And these wonderful words, unlike other human utterances, do not lose their power by repetition, but are as fresh and true and peace-inspiring now as when they were first uttered. How do they calm and soothe the grief of a bereaved heart as with a strain of heavenly music ! How do they reach under the soul bowed down with anguish, and lift it up, and transport it to a region where death and darkness and sorrow are unknown !

Let us look a little deeper into their meaning and spirit, remembering that they were spoken not to the eleven disciples alone, but to all who, like them, have need of such consolation.

My Father's House : What a world of associations, of pleasant memories and dear affections, does this word recall. It is the synonym of home, that sweetest, dearest word in human language; only it is a better word, because bearing with it the image of parental ownership and love and protection. And this is the word that our Saviour chooses to convey his idea of *death*, and his approaching departure from the world. Death, in his mind, is only a going home; and this not merely for himself, to enjoy the blessedness and glory which he had with the Father before the world was; but to open a way and prepare a place for them—for all his disciples to the end of time—that where he is there they may be also. No mention is made here of the grave. That is no house or home of man, but only of the dust which the soul has left behind it. That which we cling to so fondly, and weep over so bitterly, and bear so tenderly to its resting place, is not the being we loved and still love. *She* is not here, but is risen! As the withered calyx in which the bud was folded is forgotten in the blooming of the flower; as the dry and deserted cocoon is forgotten in the flight of the gorgeous butterfly; so the body or dust of the risen and emancipated spirit is forgotten and ignored,

at least by the soul, in that new and higher life to which it has ascended.

In the ante-Christian ages, before Christ had brought life and immortality to light. the grave was the "house appointed for all living;" and imagination grovelled with sense in the dust and below it, conceiving the place of departed spirits under the most gloomy images, as a subterranean abode of darkness and silence. Thus Job describes it as "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness." But Christ has changed all that. By his own descent into the grave, he has transformed Hades into Paradise, and the prison-land of darkness and the shadow of death into the Father's House, where light and beauty and joy and love eternal reign.

Death is not death to the Christian, but *life*. Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. What we call death is a going home to our Father's House; here we are away from home; exiles in a foreign land, strangers and pilgrims on the earth, having no continuing city or permanent abode. The true idea of home is never, or but faintly, realized here. Memory idealizes our earthly homes, and young imagination, which sees a "splendor in the grass and a glory

in the flower," invests the humblest home with an ideal glory not its own, but which belongs to the mind. But our highest ideal of home will there be fully and completely realized; for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." There is a permanent abode, the perpetual and untiring presence of kindred and friends, parental and conjugal and brotherly love, domestic happiness, sweet communion, beauty, peace and rest. All these ideas cluster around the words "Father's House;" and these are the associations which the Saviour would substitute in the minds of his disciples for the dark and gloomy ones which are commonly associated with death and the grave.

"*In my Father's House are many mansions.*" Heaven is a grand and spacious residence, large enough for the abode of all the millions of God's children. But this is not all that is meant by these words. "Many mansions" implies that there are many abodes or houses within the great house or home of our Father. Heaven is not a universal sociable, nor a vast temple of worship, as some conceive, "where congregations ne'er break up, and Sabbaths never end." It is a place of domesticity as well as worship, of private as well as public life.

Our nature is individual as well as social, and needs individual centers, or single homes, where families, or those allied by special kindred and affinity, may live together and pursue their individual work or calling, in harmony with the larger and universal society of heaven. This need of a home, or mansion, that shall be in some true sense our own, and where the privacies and sanctities of home may be cherished and preserved—this is not a necessity merely of this earthly and temporal life, but a condition of all highest and truest life, and may therefore be reasonably supposed to belong to the heavenly state. The social separations will not be so rigid and exclusive as here, where jealousies and animosities and selfishness build walls of division between neighbors and those who should be one. The home circles will doubtless be larger and less exclusive than here. But this two-fold principle of our nature—the *social* and the *individual*—will find full and perfect realization in the heavenly state. The representations of heaven in the Apocalypse under the image of a city, the New Jerusalem, with streets and walls and palaces, as well as these words of the Saviour, would seem to indicate this.

We might contrast these heavenly mansions with our earthly homes, even the best of them, in respect of

beauty and solidity and permanence, being the work, not of human, but celestial, perhaps angelic, art. We adorn our homes here with pictures and whatever is pleasing to the eye and taste; we surround and ornament them with all that is beautiful in nature and art. But what is all earthly art and beauty compared with that of heaven? We construct our houses of the best and most enduring materials; but how cheap the best of them are in comparison with the city which John saw, with its walls of jasper, its gates of pearl, and garnished with all manner of precious stones. Something of the beauty and solidity of these mansions our Saviour speaks of is indicated—symbolically, not perhaps literally—in that promise of Isaiah: “Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.” And again the Apostle says—“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” This solidity and eternal durability of the heavenly mansions we shall one day inhabit, which our friends who have died in the Lord do now inhabit, stands opposed to, and should correct, that false conception which so many entertain of

heaven, as a sort of cloud-land, shadowy, unsubstantial, and almost unreal, because it is a spiritual world. Contrary to this, the scriptures represent it as a more real and solid and substantial world than this we inhabit. Its mansions are real houses, more solid and enduring, as well as more stately than those we dwell in here. Our houses and cities fall in the course of time, or are consumed by fire; but the walls of that celestial city never crumble or consume, for it is a city which *hath foundations*, whose builder and maker is God.

“*I go,*” says Christ to his disciples, “*to prepare a place for you.*” This word indicates the love and the wisdom of Christ. When a father leaves his family and goes to California, or to some distant land, to find or to make a new home, it is not for himself alone that he goes, not to make his own fortune, or to enjoy the beauty and good which he finds there, apart from those he loves; but it is *all for them*, to prepare a place and a home for those whom he loves as his own soul. And though separated for a time, the separation is cheerfully borne in prospect of the glad re-union and the better fortune before them. So Christ, in leaving the world and going to heaven, to his Father’s house, goes not for his own sake, or his own enjoyment, not merely to enter into his glory after his life of toil and suffering

here on earth. There was indeed a joy in this thought both to his own heart and to those who loved him, as he himself said to his disciples, "If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I said, I go to the Father." But his departure to heaven was for a more benevolent purpose than this, viz., to prepare a place or home for his friends, his family and kindred here on earth; and his love and wisdom may be trusted to prepare it well.

If it be asked, *how* he prepares a place for them, or what is the preparation which he makes, I answer, there may be physical preparations needful in perfecting and fitting up the material universe, or the many mansions in his Father's house, in a manner suitable for the eternal residence of his saints. He who built and prepared the earth for man's temporal abode, may not be unworthily employed in preparing worlds and abodes for his future and eternal dwelling place. But besides this, which of course must be beyond our knowledge, there is another moral or spiritual preparation which could be effected only by his death, and which is indicated by the words so often sung: "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

Contrast here the costly preparations which Christ has made and is making to receive his friends, with that

reception which he met with when he came into this world from those he came to save. He came unto his own and his own received him not. There was not even room for him in human habitations to be born, but he had to be born in a manger, and to be cradled—this divine and heavenly babe—among the beasts of the stall.

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” Having prepared a home for his children, he does not leave them to find their way to it alone and unguided, but he comes back himself, and takes them there. What a proof of love and fidelity on the part of the Saviour does this show! And what a beautiful idea of death, the death of Christian believers, is here revealed! No dark and fearful transition, no terrible encounter with a powerful and unseen foe; but a gentle and peaceful conduct by the hand of the Saviour himself to his own glorious home, to the mansion in his Father’s house which he has prepared for each. The fear, the suffering, the conflict which we so much dread in dying, are all before, and belong to this world and this life. Death itself is as sweet and peaceful as an infant’s slumber, and joyful as an infant’s waking on

its mother's bosom ! What though the transition be an unconscious one, as often happens ; the waking on the other side, in heaven, is all the more blissful. As a traveler journeying homeward by night, enters a sleeping car many miles from home, and awakes in his native city, so the Christian lies down to sleep on earth and awakes in heaven !

This coming of the Saviour for his saints, is a twofold coming ; first at the death of the believer, when he takes the cold hand which earthly friends have relinquished, and leads the emancipated spirit through the gates into the city ; and secondly, at the resurrection at the last day, when he will come again to receive his saints clothed in a body made like unto his own glorious body ; and when the whole man, body, soul and spirit, shall ascend to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall they ever be with the Lord.

I hardly know with what words to speak of her whose untimely death we all mourn to-day. What she was in her outward life—how good and gentle and pure she was—is known to all who ever saw her ; for goodness and gentleness and purity were written on every feature of her countenance. But only those who were associated with her more intimately knew the rare worth and beauty of her character. Delicate and shrinkingly

sensitive as a flower, she yet did not shrink from any duty that was laid upon her, and was even forward to take up any burden or toil however irksome to her nature, which lay in her path. Thoroughness and fidelity characterized in an eminent degree all that she did. This was especially manifest in the instruction given to her classes, and not less in every humblest duty. Of her it may be truly said : “ She have done what she could ;” and she did it *well*, gracefully as well as thoroughly and heartily. Pure benevolence, free not only from selfishness, but from any thought of self, seemed to radiate from her presence and actions. Her sister teachers have testified to the sweet simplicity and beauty of her prayers, evincing the sincerity and quality of her religious character. Indeed, the spirit of religion, which is faith and love, mingled with all her work, and shed an aroma of goodness all around her, which was felt rather than seen ; so that her unconscious tuition was more influential in moulding and refining the character of her pupils than any positive teaching. She was connected with this institution as a teacher, about four years, though not continuously, and was more and more filling a large and indispensable place in the Seminary, and in the hearts of all who knew her. Her parents, too, were more and more looking to her as the future companion and solace of their declining years.

But the Master has called her to go up higher ; and she has left her place and labor here, to occupy the place He has prepared for her above. We will not mourn for her too bitterly, certainly not as those without hope. Let us rejoice rather that our loss is her unspeakable gain. Let us not look at the earthward, but the heavenward side of this affliction. In that higher sphere into which she has entered, there is scope for the full unfolding and exercise of all the rare faculties with which she was endowed. Her unselfish love will there find a congenial atmosphere in which to expatiate in selfless purity. Her love of beauty will there find unlimited scope for its utmost and perfect gratification. Her love of truth and ardent thirst for knowledge will be fully satisfied there, with angels for companions and Christ himself as teacher ; for it is written, “ the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water.” Happy will it be, if her pupils here shall be prepared to follow her there ; if they shall learn from her the excellence of that Christian faith which made her life so useful and beautiful, and her death so peaceful and blessed. May we all so live that we may meet again, not only her, but all those dear ones whom Christ has taken to be with him where He is, in our Father’s house.

OBITUARY.

The following obituary of MISS HAVEN was written for the *Congregationalist*, by one who knew her well, and was for some time associated with her in the Seminary at Rockford.

Died at the Seminary in Rockford, Illinois, at four o'clock P. M., Dec. 8, 1871, of Typhoid Pneumonia, after a severe illness of eight days, ELIZABETH HAVEN, daughter of Rev. Prof. Joseph Haven, of Chicago, to whom your readers need no introduction. She was born in Ashland, Mass., Dec. 15, 1843. Her early education was conducted in New England; but her father's family having subsequently removed to Chicago, she graduated at the High School in that city, and afterwards attended Mrs. Buel's family school in Providence. While there she united with Dr. Swain's church. For several years she has been an earnest and valued teacher in the Young Ladies' Seminary of this place. where her loveliness of character, combined with her fine intellectual abilities, was a source of help and strength and culture to both the hearts and minds of the pupils committed to her care. And thus suddenly, in the midst of her usefulness, has been called away one whose singular beauty of life made her akin to the angels in spiritual aspirations, while she sympathized intensely with the joys and sorrows of those about her. One of the most prominent traits in her character was her self-forgetfulness, which seemed to surround all her words

and deeds with a peculiar charm. This was so strong that it could triumph over her extreme sensitiveness; and though naturally shrinking from anything like publicity, “Where *duty* called or *danger* she was not wanting there.” Her love for all things beautiful in nature or in art amounted to almost a passion. She appeared to hold communion with flowers and trees and birds; and the splendors of our sunsets seemed to flood her soul with a rapturous joy. And it is a delightful thought that now amidst the beatific glories of the paradise of God, all the yearnings of her æsthetic nature will be completely satisfied. Another marked trait in her character was her thoroughness in whatever she undertook as daughter, student, friend or teacher. Superficial work of any kind pained her by a sense of its imperfection and insincerity. And so, her daily life, from the exquisite arranging of a bouquet, all through the realms of mental and spiritual action to her childlike faith in Christ, was characterized by a completeness as beautiful as it is rare. While her estimate of herself was always low, at times even painfully so, yet after uniting with church those that knew her best never heard her express a doubt as to her acceptance by her Saviour. Hence, during those last days, she had no preparation to make for an exchange of worlds, but was even glad to go and be with Christ. And though her time on earth measured in years was short, it was long enough to be ever remembered by those that came under its influence as a strain of heavenly music stealing softly

and soothingly upon them amidst the cares and weariness of life, calling them to a quiet trust in Him she loved so well. But while the Seminary, the home circle, and the hearts of friends are sadly bereaved, she did not leave us comfortless; but a benediction of beautiful memories of her dear words and acts has rested on our lives.

The funeral services were held in the Seminary chapel, and conducted by Rev. H. M. Goodwin, assisted by Rev. Dr. Curtis and Rev. Frank P. Woodbury. The chapel was gracefully decorated with corals, shells and flowers, and on the casket were placed a cross and crown made by loving hands, emblematic of her faith and victory, while the white flowers of which they were composed fitly typified the purity of the soul that had taken its joyful flight from the still form beneath.

A.

Rockford, Dec. 14, 1871.

WAITING FOR US.

Earth was too dark for our lovely flower,
God took her home to His garden fair ;
The fragrant blossom that graced our bower
Is now in the angels' tender care,
Blooming forever in paradise
A beautiful lily silvery-bright,
Where no clouds gather—no tempests rise,
Where all is harmony, love and light.

Her memory lingers—a sweet perfume
In the vacant arbor where we dwell ;
Never another flower can bloom
To fill her place whom we loved so well.
Her beautiful life was a poem sweet,
Rare in its meekness, charity, faith,
God lent her to us,—then oh how fleet
He sent from Heaven the Angel, Death.

The flower was blighted,—God took the germ ;
We gazed on the casket,—the soul had fled :
Like a delicate rose, the prey of the worm
The form we loved lay silent and dead ;
But the spirit-blossom is living yet
More fragrant far in the Saviour's care,
She waits for us ; when life's sun is set
We shall meet in the heavenly arbors fair.

H. F.

